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ABSTRACT

The need for librarianship of instructional gaming increases as the production of literature and games grows, and as gaming becomes progressively legitimatized as an instructional strategy. This paper presents guidelines for bibliographic control and reference services, collection development, cataloging and classification, circulation and physical maintenance, and instructional gaming programs to assist the librarian or media specialist. Citations for bibliographies and media cataloging guides are included. (Author/KP)

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THE LIBRARIANSHIP OF GAMES

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Delivered at 15th Annual Conference of North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA), Raleigh, NC, October 1976

Introduction

There is a need for a librarianship of instructional gaming. This need increases as literature and games proliferate, and as gaming becomes progressively legitimitized as an instructional strategy.

Researchers face an explosion of the literature of instructional gaming. Designers may have difficulty locating ephemeral or discontinued games in their areas of interest. Teachers need help selecting and obtaining games for the classroom. Parents and children may have problems acquiring learning games for the home.

These problems are ones of access to games and information about them, rather than problems of bibliographic control. What we need are services which support the instructional gaming community by acquiring and making readily available instructional gaming materials.

Institutions in positions to provide such services include state and local instructional materials centers, media centers, curriculum resource centers, and university and college libraries associated with teacher training programs which emphasize instructional gaming. Publishers and consulting services may find it useful to provide special library services to staff and clientele.

The purpose of this paper is to assist the librarian or media specialist responsible for instructional gaming support services by treating such common concerns as bibliographic control and reference services, collection development, cataloging and classification, circulation and physical maintenance, workshops and other programs, and materials evaluation.

Bibliographic Control and Reference Services

The bibliographic literature of instructional gaming is rich and growing. There are several comprehensive bibliographies and numerous subject-area bibliographies available. There are also many comprehensive and subject-limited directories of games. These publications become rapidly obsolete, as new games are designed and others vanish. The older volumes remain useful to researchers and designers trying to track down discontinued games.

Among the most helpful of the general bibliographies and directories are the following:

•Belch, Jean, ed. Contemporary Games. Vol. I, Directory. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1973, 560 pp. $35.00.

•Belch, Jean, ed. Contemporary Games. Vol. II, Bibliography. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1974, 408 pp. $45.00.

•Horn, Robert, ed. The Guide to Simulations/Games for Education and Training. Third Edition. Cranford, New Jersey: Didactic Systems, Inc., 1976. $27.00.

•Stadsklev, Ron, ed. Handbook of Simulation Gaming in Social Education, Part Two: Directory. University, Alabama: Institute of Higher Education Research and Services, 1975. 345 pp. $16.00.

Current awareness may be maintained through the key periodicals Simulation and Games and Simulation/Gaming (formerly Simulation/Gaming/News). Subscription information follows:

•Simulation and Games. Quarterly. Sage Publications, Inc., 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. $18.00/year.

•Simulation/Gaming. Bi. Monthly. S/G, Box 3039, University Station, Moscow, ID 83843. $6.00/year.

Much of the literature of instructional gaming is available on ERIC microfiche. The library may identify such documents directly through the index Resources In Education or use the listings of ERIC documents appearing in Simulation/Gaming/News and other publications. In either case, a microfiche reader or reader/printer could be very useful. So might microfilm reading equipment, because of the substantial number of doctoral dissertations concerned with instructional gaming, many of which are indexed by Dissertations Abstracts and made available by University Microfilms.

Both dissertations and ERIC documents may be identified by computer search, through DIALOG, DATRIX, and a variety of similar services. A missing service is a comprehensive data bank of instructional games. The construction of such a file might be possible for a well-supported game library with access to a computer. Access to a computer would also make possible utilization of computerized simulation/games.

Whether or not the library owns all of these reference tools, the librarians should know what they are and where to find them. They will enable the librarian to assist researchers, help teachers select appropriate materials, and provide a sound basis for acquisitions and collection development. The librarian would also be in a superior position to produce comprehensive bibliographies on special topics in instructional gaming for use by the gaming community.

Collection Development

Collection development decisions should be based on the particular mission of the library and the availability of funds. A library providing a variety of media may find it best to set aside a portion of its budget for gaming materials.

The library serving researchers and designers will probably want to acquire texts and key works in the library's area of specialization. Annotated bibliographies, selection guides, and book reviews will aid in the selection of such materials.

The library wishing to establish a game collection should acquire publishers' catalogs in addition to the available directories, selection guides, and published game reviews.

As game libraries discover each other, the potential for collection specialization and inter-library cooperation increases. Since complex simulation/games are relatively expensive items, there is a real benefit to be obtained through networking and inter-library loan programs. This would also help ensure the continued availability of out-of-print or discontinued games.

Cataloging and Classification

Standard practice in multi-media collections is universal application of a single cataloging and classification system whether or not materials are physically interfiled. Media cataloging guides are available which suggest cataloging formats for games. Several are listed below:

- Cataloging Guide for Instructional Materials Used in Livonia Public Schools Instructional Materials Centers. Livonia, Michigan: Livonia Public Schools, 1973. 52 pp. (ED 092 134)

- "Design for Cataloging Non-Book Materials: Adaptable to Computer Use". Rochester, New York: Genessee Valley School Development Association, 1969. 31 pp. (ED 045 153)

- Hicks, William B.; and Alma M. Tillin. The Organization of Non-Book Materials in School Libraries. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1967. 75 pp. (ED 017 281)

- Little, Robert David; and others (Eds.) Cataloging, Processing, Administering AV Materials. A Model for Wisconsin Schools Revised, 1974. Madison: Wisconsin Library Association, 1974. 63 pp. (ED 093 261)

- Riddle, Jean; and others. Non-Book Materials: The Organization of Integrated Collections. Preliminary Edition. Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1970. 62 pp.

- Shifrin, Malcolm. Information in the School Library. An Introduction to the Organization of Non-Book Materials. Hamden, Connecticut: Linnet Books, 1973.

Special game collections may be classified more functionally. For instance, Redfield State Hospital in South Dakota maintains a collection of games and toys for mentally retarded children which is organized under the headings of communication skills, concepts, life skills, motor skills, and sensory skills.

Several interesting approaches to game classification for library purposes are suggested by the literature of gaming. The multiple indexing feature

of the Guide to Simulations/Games for Education and Training could be adapted for library purposes, as might the available theoretical taxonomies.

Circulation and Physical Maintenance

Circulation policies are closely associated with library mission and purpose. A great variety of game libraries exist now.

Many public libraries in the United States and elsewhere maintain game rooms with non-circulating gaming materials. Others loan games to children just as they would books. The Swedish national toy-library program provides parents of emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded children with games and toys for use at home. These are returned when no longer needed. Institutional programs for mentally retarded children and elderly mentally ill persons in this country lend materials to both staff and residents.

School media centers are acquiring games for classroom use by teachers. On the state level, the New Jersey Occupational Resource Center maintains a circulating collection of over 150 instructional game titles. The University of Minnesota, in association with the Joint Council on Economic Education, established a statewide lending program for Minnesota teachers and issued the annotated bibliography Games and Simulations for Teaching Economics. Other gaming activity centers have engaged in game-lending at various degrees of formality and sophistication.

Borrower selection of games may be improved through the creation of a game evaluation file, consisting of evaluation instruments returned by earlier borrowers. Librarians wishing to design such an instrument might review Ronald Stadsklev's "Games Analysis System: An Analytical Instrument to Help Evaluate Simulation Games" (ED 049 100).

Physical care of circulating game materials is a constant problem. Partial solutions include re-packaging or reinforcement of original packaging, inventory of game components, systematic checking of returned materials, and the creation of files containing specimen game manuals, expendable forms, and the parts reordering cards provided by some publishers.

Circulating game materials are exceptionally vulnerable to wear, damage, or loss. The only real solution is constant care by people familiar with the material.

Programs

Game libraries associated with gaming activity centers might play a vital but supportive role, providing staff with materials or information as needed. In other situations, the library might be the local center of instructional gaming activity, and might be expected to show more initiative in designing game-related programs. This would be especially true for game libraries associated with state or regional instructional materials centers.

Programs operated by such centers could include systematic support of teacher education courses using game materials, weekly series of game demonstrations, orientation workshops, and workshops on special topics, such as design or instructional gaming in particular subject areas.